

tions with Germany ; to maintain our traditions of an invincible navy and a small voluntary army; to be friends with the United States ; to keep the alliance with Japan in repair ; to work for reforms in Macedonia and the Belgian Congo ; to labour for peace without forgetting the dread possibilities of war. Of such a programme there is no need to be ashamed. That it proved impossible to avert a catastrophe in 1914 was due to the co-existence of three deep-rooted antagonisms—the Franco-German feud about the Rhine provinces, the Anglo-German dispute about the fleet, the Austro-Russian rivalry in the Near East. For none of them were British statesmen responsible. At the opening of the twentieth century Europe was faced with problems too complex to be solved by a single State. The belief that any nation or statesman was an arch criminal is no longer held by serious students of history. It is part of the tragedy of the World War that every belligerent can make out a case entirely convincing to itself. For tragedy, in Hegel's words, is the conflict not of right with wrong, but of right with right. How could the system of armed groups and alliances in an age of rampant Imperialism be expected to inaugurate a co-operative and stabilized world ? The ultimate cause of the explosion was the European anarchy, the absence of international machinery, the doctrine of the unfettered national State, the universal assumption that the graver disputes could only be settled by war.

CONVERSATION WITH LORD GREY, FEBRUARY 14,

1929

PRINCIPLES OF POLICY

7. Your policy, as I understand it, was based on three principles—two old, one new. The first was suprémacie

at sea.

G. Yes, but leaving the United States out of account. I never regarded the Two Power standard as applying to them.

L The second was the Balance of Power.

G. I don't like that phrase.

L I mean by it what you have expressed as follows : " England has always drifted or deliberately gone into opposition to any Power which establishes a hegemony in Europe."*

G. Thus interpreted, I accept it.

L Your third principle was friendship with France.

G. Yes.

L. You also took over from Lansdowne the policy of a rapprochement with Russia. Nearly all foreign and some English writers